

CHAPTER 3

THE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Naturally occurring conversation has to be dealt with carefully because data collection and analysis is not that straightforward. Studies discussed in the Chapter 2 have shown how useful Grice's concept of conversational implicature is for the analysis of conversations. This study uses the framework provided by Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims to examine the violations in conversations that convey specific implicatures and the strategies involved in conveying such implicatures. This chapter will focus on the methodology employed in collecting data for the purpose of analysis along the lines stated above.

3.2 The sample

The sample consists of the deejays and the callers of the radio programme Hitz with the Morning Crew. They represent Malaysian speakers who use English as a second language quite confidently and competently. This programme has two or three deejays: usually two males and one female. The two male deejays usually dominate the programme. These two are known as Lil' Kev and Flyguy. The callers for this programme call in voluntarily to participate in the programme. The particulars of the deejays and the callers are as follows:

Sample	Male Deejay	Female Deejay	No. of callers
#1	2	1	3
#2	2	1	2
#3	2	1	2
#4	2	1	4
#5	2	0	3
#6	2	1	3
TOTAL			17

The participants in the conversations range from two to four people; giving rise to two-party and multi-party talk. The exchanges are between deejay and deejay, or deejay(s) and caller(s). All the callers speak through the telephone. No one is interviewed face-to-face in the studio.

The ability to convey and interpret conversational implicature demands a fairly good proficiency in the English Language. The radio programme from which the data was collected provides an indication of the language proficiency of Malaysian ESL speakers. The speakers have the ability to articulate words clearly and correctly and to speak the language with a certain degree of fluency. They also appear to have a sound knowledge of grammatical structures and use vocabulary fairly well.

3.3 The Data Collection

3.3.1 The audio-recordings

The data for this study are audio-recordings of the verbal interactions in the radio programme Hitz with the Morning Crew.

The programme was recorded as it was broadcasted on air. There was no access to the non-verbal aspects of the interactions for the following reasons:

1. the recordings were audio-recordings and not video-recordings.
2. the recording was done at home without the presence of the researcher in the studios at the time of the interactions.

The data for this study is in the form of audio-recordings of a radio programme. Since there is no physical proximity between participants owing to the absence of face-to-face interactions in the studio, the verbal communication between the participants of conversation is of utmost importance. Thus, there is heavy reliance on verbal input as well as other non-verbal vocalizations such as laughter, grunts and other sounds such as 'hm.., oh.., huh..,' and the use of particles such as 'lah' and 'ah' that emerge in these conversations. Such evidence was taken into consideration together with the verbal data while carrying out the analysis.

The reason the spoken discourse in this programme was chosen for analysis is because it offers quite a wide spectrum of speakers of English in Malaysia. That is because this programme has a mass audience and is accessible to members of the general public who may want to call in and contribute to the conversations. This has a profound effect on the quality of the data collected because as Labov states, "we want to observe and record speakers talking the way they do when they are not being observed and recorded." (1992:209).

As such, the language in this programme is naturally occurring and therefore provides an authentic source of data. Two outstanding features of this programme are the informal style and the spontaneity of the unscripted conversations.

The selection of data is also based on the features of this radio programme. The two-hour programme each morning features a topic or two a day for discussions, where the deejays invite callers to call in to comment on what has been said or to air their views. There are also some quizzes and competitions for the participants with interesting prizes to be won. The topics of discussions are wide-ranging covering areas such as physical abuse, sibling rivalry, travel, personal ambitions, marriage, women's accessories, sports, corporal punishment and the Malaysian Book of Records. The topics discussed are common everyday matters that are likely to be of interest to the general public. In between the verbal exchanges, the deejays spin music. There are also commercial breaks, jokes, traffic reports and weather updates from time to time.

The researcher recorded eight programmes and used this as the primary data. A regular tape recorder was used. The programme was recorded between April and September 1999. Even though a tape recorder was used, the recorder was not intrusive because it was recorded from the radio programme on air and not in the studio.

For the purpose of analysis, the researcher selected six samples from the primary data and these were classified as Samples # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Each sample has segments of spoken exchanges interspersed with music, traffic reports and weather updates. The duration of each segment is approximately

5 - 9 minutes. The total amount of time of the spoken exchanges (taking an average time of six minutes per segment) is 138 minutes or 2 hours and 18 minutes.

The particulars of the six samples of the data are as follows:

Sample	No. of segments	Duration in minutes
#1	2	12
#2	4	24
#3	5	30
#4	6	36
#5	3	18
#6	3	18
TOTAL	23	138

3.4 The tools of analysis

3.4.1 The Gricean framework

This study uses Grice's framework for analysis. The focus was on the evidence of the Cooperative Principle, the adherence or violations of the four conversational maxims and the strategies that were used to convey the implicatures successfully. Attention was also paid to the context of the situation and the background knowledge of the speakers in making inferences and establishing meanings.

3.4.2 The Qualitative Aspect

While the implicatures are conveyed by the speakers in this programme, the recovery of the implied meaning by the deejays or callers is reflected in their responses. In addition, the researcher as an uninvolved third person listening in to the programme is also in a position to make inferences based upon what is said in the particular context of utterances. Therefore, the interpretation of implied meaning is based on the responses of the deejays and the callers; and the inferences of the researcher herself.

To ensure that good quality data is collected in keeping with the requirements of validity as well as to check and confirm the interpretation of meanings, the researcher allowed people to casually listen to this programme. These listeners, about 12 in number, comprised English teachers, secondary school students and other speakers of English. They listened to the recordings randomly and the researcher listened and noted their oral responses. These responses were taken into consideration when the analysis of the primary data was carried out. This also supported the validity of the findings and the theoretical claims upon which they are based.

3.4.3 The Quantitative Aspect

This study also takes into account the quantitative aspect of the data with a view of validating the significance of the findings. Thus, the frequency of maxim violation, the classes of maxim violation; and the strategies employed are also given consideration.

3.5 The transcription conventions

The spoken discourse recorded on tape had to be transcribed orthographically for the purpose of examination and analysis. The six samples for this study were orthographically transcribed using the transcription conventions of DuBois (1991). DuBois' transcription conventions are chosen because the categories are sufficiently defined for the purpose of this study. The primary focus of this study was on the verbal output, and non-verbal vocalizations were taken into consideration only in so far as they shed light on the meaning conveyed by the speakers.

The following are the notations used in the data for discourse transcription:

Categories	Notations
1. Speakers:	
(i) Speech overlap	[]
2. Pauses:	
(i) Long	...(N)
(ii) Medium	...
(iii) Short	..
3. Vocal noises:	
(i) Laughter	@
4. Transcriber's perspective:	
(i) Researcher's comment	(())
(ii) Uncertain hearing	{ X X }
5. Specialized notations:	
(i) Code-switching	[L2 L2]

For the purpose of brevity, the following abbreviations were also used as part of the transcript:

Morning Crew DeeJay 1 (male)	MC1
Morning Crew DeeJay 2 (male)	MC2
Morning Crew DeeJay 3 (female)	MC3
First caller for that segment	C1
Second caller for that segment	C2
Third caller for that segment	C3

All other callers were noted by their names.